

Brighton & Hove Community & Voluntary Sector



Annual Report 2007/2008

Contents

| | |
|--------|--------------|
| Page 3 | Introduction |
| Page 4 | Information |
| Page 5 | Networks |
| Page 6 | Influencing |
| Page 7 | Accounts |
| Page 8 | Housekeeping |

Our aims

To support networking between community and voluntary organisations so that they can share experience and good practice.

To develop the influence of the community and voluntary sector when making decisions alongside the public and private sectors.

Our objectives

To create a shared identity within the sector

To reach out to people not currently involved

To inform community and voluntary organisations

To bring people together to exchange good practice

To undertake research

To develop policies based on common and specialist views

To co-ordinate consultation with the sector

To elect and support the sector's representatives on citywide strategic partnerships

To promote the sector's contribution to the city



Introduction



It has been an exciting year for the Community and Voluntary Sector Forum. In the lead up to our tenth anniversary, we have reviewed and strengthened many of our core services, around information and communication, networking and representation of the sector.

This year's annual report will give you a flavour of some of these activities.

Maximising opportunities for the community and voluntary sector is at the heart of CVSF's work in the city.

By ensuring that the community and voluntary perspective is included in citywide decision making processes and

championing the role of the sector in local service delivery, we continue to make progress in building positive and strategic relationships between organisations and sectors.

Like many of our members, we find ourselves juggling demands to facilitate the involvement of the sector in an increasingly wide range of initiatives.

Our approach is to review what fits with the organisation's values, aims, objectives and work plan, and consult with our members on their needs to determine an appropriate response. We hope we mostly strike the right balance, seizing opportunities for the sector to be involved and share its expertise, while trying not to overload members with information or meetings.

CVSF members remain committed to coming together to strengthen the sector's collective experience and voice; we achieve this through different activities such as events, networks and

online information sharing. We are very grateful to CVSF member organisations for their support, and particularly to our 36 elected CVSF representatives active in 2007/8. Their input allows CVSF to deliver on its priorities and ensures that the sector is well represented and therefore increasingly valued by partners, on account of our local connections, knowledge and skills.

And finally, we thank the dedicated team of CVSF trustees, staff and volunteers, whose enthusiasm has helped drive the organisation forward.

We look forward to continued partnership working in 2008/9.

Debbie Charman, Chair, and
Sally Hiscock, Chief Executive,
Brighton and Hove
Community and Voluntary Sector Forum

“Information: provide a channel of information between community and voluntary organisations and local and central government agencies or other organisations.”

Giving our members the right information to support them is like getting the right ingredients for the cake.

Our new, monthly, e-Dialogue is a fresh way of keeping members aware of our activities, alerting them to new reports from elected reps and sharing news from other organisations.

It also helps direct people to different sections of our website, where more in depth information is held, including notes from partnership and network meetings, lists of representatives, details about our projects and various local consultations.

We have played a strong role in the development of Spoke, a new magazine for the local community and voluntary sector, developed by the ChangeUp consortium.

We know that encouraging our reps to share their reflections with the members after meetings is a big ask.

We will keep asking anyway!

We only want a short write up after meetings which we post on our website, so that all members are kept up to speed with the work of citywide partnerships.

Our email discussion list continues to provide space for our members to share information with each other, as well as enabling the CVSF team to keep members up to date with news and information.

All these channels help us to provide members with information. Getting the right mix of policy, feedback and news helps the sector to make decisions about what they may (or may not) want to be involved in.

Making these systems more efficient will continue to play a large part of our work in 2008/09.

Impact

- Community and voluntary organisations have access to appropriate information to enable them to develop their views about key issues.
- Community and voluntary organisations have knowledge of current local, regional and national developments affecting their work.



“Networks: provide a network of communication for community and voluntary organisations”

Our range of networks now includes the Community Festivals Forum and a Community Arts Network, as well as the Children & Young People Network, Mental Health Network, Learning Network and Environment Network. We have also created more chances for our members to network informally.

Our quarterly conferences continued to provide a warmly received opportunity for members to catch up with each other, while a neighbourhoods Conference in September and Equalities Conference in March brought members together to support under represented communities to be involved in community and voluntary sector activities.

Our themed networking events attracted a wide range of members and other people interested in an issue or theme linked to the 2020 Community Partnership (the Local Strategic Partnership - the LSP) and Sustainable Community Strategy.

They provided a forum for key priorities for the whole sector to be debated.

The networking events discussed:

- climate change
- reducing health inequalities
- housing
- employment, skills and the local economy
- crime and safety
- creating responsive services and empowered communities
- improving the quality of services
- transport.

A series of online voting sessions followed the themed networking events. Votes were cast, results analysed and the priorities identified and used by reps to influence discussions and decisions at strategic city wide meetings.

2008/09 will see continued development of our networking activities, including new ‘Your Space’ events and the LINK (Local Involvement Network).

Impact

- Community and voluntary organisations meet and communicate better with one another.
- Community and voluntary organisations are actively engaged in the development and operation of effective working partnerships, working together where relevant.
- Community and voluntary organisations benefit from network connections to and agreements with other agencies.



“Influencing: bringing together representatives of community and voluntary organisations, statutory authorities and other agencies to identify the funding and policy needs of community and voluntary organisations”



Our elected representatives are our raising agents, taking the voices of the community and voluntary sector to the city’s decision makers.

This year, the CVSF and its members have played a crucial role in setting the priorities in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), a three year plan agreed between the statutory and voluntary sectors. Our influence has ensured the sectors’ priorities were fed back to the partners involved in setting the LAA targets.

The CVSF’s Stronger Communities Programme brings together groups and communities to have a meaningful voice on the city’s 2020 Community Partnership (the LSP), and a range of activities, including training and

networking events, encourage people from a broad range of communities to be empowered and self confident, so they can have more say over decisions which affect their daily lives. Groups from different city neighbourhoods and communities of interest are actively involved in the programme, for example, our reps on the Neighbourhood Renewal Group ensured that the Neighbourhood Renewal Programme met the priority needs in different neighbourhoods.

Ten representatives elected onto boards or strategic groups of the Children and Young People’s Trust have influenced what services are delivered and how, bringing expertise, innovation and local connections to the partnership table.

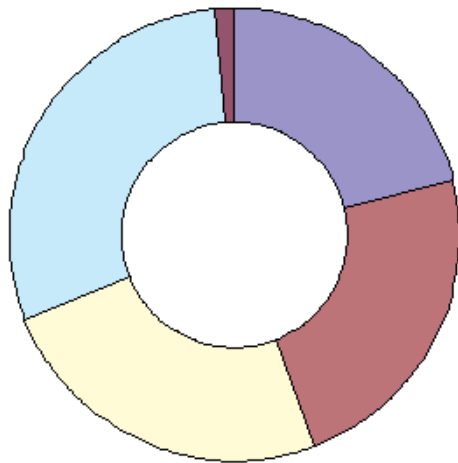
We are well placed to ensure the work of the community and voluntary sector is recognised and embedded in the cross sector, decision making boards and partnerships in the city.

Impact

- Community and voluntary organisations have knowledge and skills to become more involved in local partnership structures (eg the LSP & LAA).
- Community and voluntary organisations have accountable and diverse representation on key local strategic initiatives.
- Community and voluntary sector views are sought by external agencies and are an integral part of planning and policy making.
- Community and voluntary organisations inform statutory organisations about changing needs in local communities.

Balancing the books

How we spent our funding, 2007/08

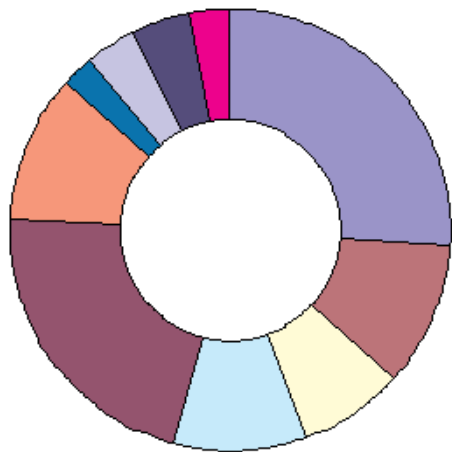


- Information & communication with the sector
- Engagement of the sector
- Representation of the sector
- Infrastructure development work
- Governance costs

Summary Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 March 2008

| | 2007/08 | 2006/07 |
|-----------------------------|---------|---------|
| | £ | £ |
| Total incoming resources | 365,371 | 303,648 |
| Total resources expended | 362,144 | 276,262 |
| Net incoming resources | 3,227 | 27,386 |
| Fund balances 1 April 2007 | 75,709 | 48,323 |
| Fund balances 31 March 2008 | 78,936 | 75,709 |

How we were funded, 2007/08



- Stronger Communities Programme, B&H City Council
- B&H City Teaching Primary Care Trust
- B&H City Council Discretionary Grant
- Capacitybuilders Consortium Development Fund
- Capacitybuilders Consortia Project Programme
- Children and Young People's Trust (including CWDC)
- Global Grant
- Economic and Social Audit (B&H City Council and PCT)
- LAA Development Fund (B&H City Council)
- Communities of Interest Fund (deferred from 06/07)

The financial statements for the year ending 31 March 2008 have been given an unqualified audit report by our auditors, Clark Brownscombe.

A copy of the full financial statement is available on request from:

The Company Secretary
 Brighton & Hove Community and
 Voluntary Sector Forum
 Community Base
 113 Queens Road
 Brighton BN1 3XG

Staff employed during 2007/08

Duncan Blinkhorn
Michelle Butler (until June 2007)
Nicola Chanamoto
Sally Hiscock
Katy McGrory
Emily O'Brien
Dan Salisbury

Thank you to...

All our members; you are amazing! Our network members, who regularly and tirelessly come together for the greater good. Our elected representatives, not only for attending meetings and speaking on behalf of us all, but for all they do above and beyond the call of duty. Our work is all the richer for them.

Our funders, who recognise the important contribution the community and voluntary sector makes in Brighton and Hove.

The volunteers who have supported the team throughout the year, providing extra hands and good humour in the office: Nick Teasdale; Jane Powell; Suzie Kelly. And our members who have facilitated and supported us at our events.

Simon Bottrell at 7 Creative and Gemini Press for their generous support.

Trustees serving during 2007/8

Debbie Charman
Rik Child
Jon Cooper
Michael Creedy
Emma Gaskin
Simon Lewis
Naima Nouidjem
Emma Osborne (June - November 2007)
Tim Smith

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